

Office of Interdisciplinary Studies
<http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/ois/>

Middle Eastern and African Studies Program
MEAS 300: Fall Term 2010
Arab Cinema

Instructor: Iman Mersal
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Office Hours: Mondays 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM or by appointment
E-mail: imersal@ualberta.ca
Course website: <http://bit.ly/arabcinema>

Time: Tues & Thurs, 3:30 to 4:50 PM
Place: HC L 2

Course Prerequisite: none
Course-based Ethics Approval: not required
Community Service learning component: none
Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material available: representative exam material to be distributed in class.

Course Description and Objectives:

This course offers an introduction to the history and development of Arab cinema from its beginnings to the present. It explores different aspects of modern Arab history, culture and society as they are illustrated by male and female Arab filmmakers.

During the course of the semester students will be required to watch eleven Arab films at the ARC (Old Arts building room 135) as explained in the course schedule below. These films offer a source of representations of society, social class, gender and politics in Arab culture. Class lectures and discussions aim to introduce you to a variety of topics, theories, and debates within the field of Middle Eastern studies. The focus will be on five central themes and their implications for Arab identity formation:

1. *Reflecting and shaping the history of the 20th century*
2. *Adaptation and realism* (Egypt)
3. *Narrating the struggle for liberation* (Palestine)
4. *Saving the memory of cities from war and displacement* (Lebanon and Iraq)
5. *Negotiating the body in an Islamic space* (Tunisia)

The films have been selected not only on the basis of their cinematic and artistic value, but also their textual, cultural and historical engagement with the five themes. Filmmakers include Ahmad Badrakhan, Henri Barakat, Hassan al-Imam, Tawfik Saleh and Marwan Hamed (Egypt); Michel Khaleifi and Elia Sulieman (Palestine); Ziad Douerie and Jocelyne Saab (Lebanon); Samir (Iraq), Ferid Boughedir (Tunisia).

Students are expected to complete required readings and watch films in advance of the class for which they are assigned, attend every class, and participate in classroom discussions in order to receive the maximum participation grade. All readings are drawn from required texts, available in the SUB bookstore, or online, as explained below.

Text available in the SUB bookstore:

Viola Shafik, *Arab cinema. History and Cultural identity*. The American University in Cairo Press, Cairo, 2007.

Required films (available at ARC from 8 am to 4 pm according to the course schedule below)

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| <p>1- Dananeer: Feature Film (1940).
Director: Ahmad Badrakhan.
Time: 90 minutes.</p> <p>2- Nightingale's Prayer: Feature Film (1959).
Director: Henri Barakat.
Time: 126 minutes.</p> <p>3- Midaq Alley: Feature Film (1963).
Director: Hassan al- Imam.
Time: 105 minutes.</p> <p>4- The Yacoubian Building: Feature Film (2006).
Director: Marwan Hamed.
Time: 161 minutes.</p> <p>5- The Dupes: Feature Film (1972).
Director: Tawfik Saleh.
Time: 107 minutes.</p> | <p>6- Wedding In Galilee: Feature Film (1987).
Director: Michel Khleifi.
Time: 113 minutes.</p> <p>7- Divine Intervention: Feature Film (2002).
Director: Elia Suleiman.
Time: 92 minutes.</p> <p>8- West Beirut: Feature Film (1998).
Director: Ziad Doueiri.
Time: 105 minutes.</p> <p>9- Once Upon a Time, Beirut: Feature Film (1994).
Director: Jocelyne Saab.
Time: 101 minutes.</p> <p>10- Forget Baghdad: Documentary. (2004).
Time: 111 minutes.</p> <p>11- Halfaouine: Boy of The Terraces: Feature Film.
Director: Ferid Boughedir.
Time: 98 minutes.</p> |
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Online reading (to be placed on course website):

- Rebecca Hillaur 2005. Encyclopaedia of Arab Women Filmmakers. selected reading.
- Akeel Belgrami 1992. What a Muslim Fundamental Commitment and Cultural Identity? . pp. 821- 842.
- Malek Khouri 2010. The Arab National Project in Youssef Chahine's Cinema. pp.1-16.
- Interview with Naguib Mahfouz 1992.
- Interview with Nabail Ayouch.

Course Schedule:

	Tuesday	Thursday	Topic
Week 1		9-Sept	Introduction
<i>Unit one: Reflecting and shaping the history of the 20th century.</i>			
Week 2	14- Sept	16- Sept	Required reading: Viola Shafik, <i>Arab cinema. History and Cultural identity</i> . pp. 9- 45..
			Required watching: Dananeer: Musical film. (1940). (At ARC from Sept 20- 24) Required Reading: Viola Shafik. Arab Cinema. pp. 101- 120
Week 3	21- Sept	23- Sept	Rebecca Hillaur. Encyclopaedia of Arab Women Filmmakers. pp. 27- 32.
<i>Unit two: Adaptation and realism</i>			

Week 3	28- Sept	30- Sept	Required watching: Nightingale's Prayer: Feature Film (1959). Time: 126 minutes. (At ARC from Sept 27- Oct1). Required Reading: Viola Shafik. Arab Cinema. pp. 121- 143.
Week 4	5- Oct	7- Oct	Required watching: <i>Midaq Alley</i> : - Midaq Ally. Feature Film, (1963). Time: (105 minutes (At ARC from Oct 4- 8) Required Reading: Online. Interview with Mahfuz from <i>The Paris Review</i> , Summer 1992.
Week 5	12- Oct	14- Oct	Required watching: Yacoubian Building: Feature Film (2006). Time: 161 minutes. (At ARC from Oct 11- 15). Required Reading : Akeel Belgrami 1992. What a Muslim Fundamental Commitment and Cultural Identity? . pp. 821- 842.
<i>Unit three: Narrating the struggle for liberation</i>			
Week 5	19- Oct	21- Oct	Required watching: The Dupes: Feature Film (1972). Time: 107 minutes. (At ARC from Oct 18- 22) Reading: TBA
Week 6	26- Oct	28- Oct	Required watching: Wedding in Galilee: Feature Film (1987). Time: 113. (At ARC from Oct 25- 28). Required reading: TBA
Week 8	2- Nov	4- Nov	General discussion and Midterm on Nov 4
<i>Unit four: saving the memory of cities from war and displacement.</i>			
Week 9	9- Nov	No class	Required watching: West Beirut: Feature Film (1998). Time: 105 minutes. (course website). Required Reading: TBA
Week 10	16- Nov	18- Nov	Required watching: Once Upon a Time, Beirut: Feature Film (1994). Time: 101 minutes. (At ARC from Nov 15- 19). Required Reading: Rebecca Hillaur. Encyclopaedia of Arab Women Filmmakers. pp. 130- 141 and 173- 177.
Week 11	23- Nov	25-Nov	Required watching: Forget Baghdad: Documentary. (2004). Director: Samir (111 minutes) Time: 90 minutes. (At ARC from Nov 22- Nov 26). Required Reading: Poetry about Baghdad. Alsyaab and Bulis. 10 pages
<i>Unit five: Negotiating the body in an Islamic space</i>			
Week 11	30- Nov	1-Dec	Required watching: Halfaouine: Boy of The Terraces: Feature Film.

			Director: Ferid Boughedir. Time:98 minutes. (At ARC from Nov 29- Dec 3).
Week 12	7- Dec		General Discussion

Grading:

Activity	%
Attendance and participation	20%
Tow reading report: Sept 26 & Oct 17	10%
Midterm quiz (Nov 9)	25%
Oral presentation	10%
Final Paper (Dec 14)	35%
Total	100%

Course requirements:

- Regular class attendance; active participation.
- Completing weekly watching and reading assignments on time, in order to participate in class discussions effectively.
- Two reading reports **due Sept 26 & Oct 17**
- Midterm quiz **Nov 9**.
- Individual meetings (to discuss papers and presentations), November 19.
- 10-15 minute oral presentation on your research paper topic.
- Paper on your research topic (15 pages, double spaced, 12 pt, 1" margins) elaborating your presentation, based on class readings plus at least 5 additional scholarly sources relevant to your topic. **Due Dec 14.**

Required Notes:

"Policy about course outlines can be found in Section 23.4(2) of the University calendar." (GFC 29 SEP 2003).

"The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at www.ualberta.ca/secretariat/appeals.htm) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University." (GFC 29 SEP 2003)

☛ *Plagiarism and Cheating:*

All students should consult the "Truth-In-Education" handbook or Website (<http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/TIE/>) regarding the definitions of plagiarism and its consequences when detected.

Students involved in language courses and translation courses should be aware that on-line "translation engines" produce very dubious and unreliable "translations."

Students in languages courses should be aware that, while seeking the advice of native or expert speakers is often helpful, excessive editorial and creative help in assignments is considered a form of "cheating" that violates the code of student conduct with dire consequences. An instructor who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. Before unpleasantness occurs consult <http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/TIE/>; also discuss this matter with any tutor(s) and with your instructor.

Grading:

Marks for assignments, tests, and exams are given in percentages, to which letter grades are also assigned, according to the table below ("OIS Undergraduate Grading Scale"). The percentage mark resulting from the entire term work and examination then produces the final letter grade for the course.

Descriptor	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value
Excellent	A+	4.0
	A	4.0
	A-	3.7
Good	B+	3.3
	B	3.0
	B-	2.7
Satisfactory	C+	2.3
	C	2.0
	C-	1.7
Poor Minimal Pass	D+	1.3
	D	1.0
Failure	F or F4	0.0